

MINNESOTA CHESS JOURNAL

Educate | Encourage | Participate

Minnesota State Chess Association

The Minnesota State Chess Association (MSCA) is the designated state affiliate of the United States Chess Federation (USCF) and as such, awards the official Minnesota State Champion Titles as recognized by the USCF.

Current Minnesota State Champions

Open: Samrug Narayanan
 Senior: Tim Radermacher
 Blitz: Jackson Wahl
 K-12: Samrug Narayanan
 K-8: Vaibhav Kalpaka
 K-5: Vihaan Pendse & Ajay Singamsetty
 GK-12: Nastassja Matus

MSCA Board of Directors

Jenny Bourne - President
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Samrug Narayanan is Crowned the 2023 Minnesota State Chess Champion!!

Minnesota has a new State Chess Champion! Fueled by a key 2nd round victory against 11-time State Champion IM Sean Nagle, FM Samrug Narayanan went on to score 4.5 out of the possible 5.0 points to take home the Stenberg Cup as one of Minnesota's youngest-ever State Champions. With this stellar performance, Samrug becomes only the 3rd chess player in Minnesota history to simultaneously hold both the K-12 high school and overall state championships.

Samrug battled back with the black pieces against Nagle after dropping the exchange. Samrug then completed his "Super Saturday" with a brilliantly efficient win against Iowan NM Joseph Wan, who was the 3rd highest rated player in the championship section. Samrug was awarded the Brilliancy Prize for his efforts against Wan. The game is included in this edition of the Journal and provides an excellent tutorial for readers on how to (1) transition to a favorable opening variation, (2) accumulate small positional advantages, (3) translate an accumulated positional



Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Members

Original Inductees:

Curt Brasket
George Tiers
David Kuhns
Dan Voje
E.P. Elliot
Louis Uedemann

Class of 2018:

George Barnes
Eduard Zelkind
Larry Lampert

Class of 2019:

Sean Nagle
John Bartholomew
Victor Adler
Brian Ribnick

Class of 2020:

Nels Truelson
Ted Haugan
Alex Balandin
Ed Conway

Class of 2021:

Roger Rudolph
Milt Otteson
Russ Erickson
Jacob Harris

Class of 2022:

Roger Hale
Marv Mattson
Tim Radermacher
Mike Valvo

Class of 2023:

Leonard Johnson
Joe Longen
Warren Stenberg

advantage into a tangible material advantage, (4) eliminate your opponent's counter play in a "won" endgame, and (5) execute a technical win with masterful technique.

The playoffs were held in Plymouth and were directed by Dane Zagar. In the U2200 Section it was Ionatan Giurgiu winning with 3.5/5.0 points in a tightly matched field. In the U2000 Section, Eddie Wasserman won by a full 1.5 points over his colleagues. In the U1700 Section it was Michael Haynes wrapping up 1st place with a 4-0 start before he finally suffered a defeat in Round 5 against rising 5th grade phenom Kavish Kishore. Congratulations to everyone on the excellent fighting chess played over the playoff weekend! Only 35% of the 60 games resulted in draws...and in the U1700 Section there were a grand total of zero draws!

Following are the Brilliancy Prize winning games and the cross tables from each of the four playoff sections.

Brilliancy Prizes:

Championship Section:

Samrug Narayanan (2372) for his Round 3 technical masterpiece against Joseph Wan (2318).

U2200 Section:

Ionatan Giurgiu (2130) for the Round 4 victory against runner-up Tim Radermacher (2135) that won him 1st prize for the section.

Note this game from the playoffs is not annotated, but in the next issue we will publish Ionatan's masterpiece (full of annotations) when he defeated Radermacher in the last round of the 2023 Minnesota Open.

U1700 Section:

Tie: Kavish Kishore (1373) for his Round 5 upset win against then undefeated U1700 section winner Michael Haynes (1781). Mike Benson (1548) for his Round 3 attacking victory against Eric Jensen (1488).

Minnesota State Championship Play-Offs: March 24-26, 2023 @ Plymouth Crowne Plaza Hotel

<u>Place</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Total Pts</u>	<u>Round 1</u>	<u>Round 2</u>	<u>Round 3</u>	<u>Round 4</u>	<u>Round 5</u>
1	FM Samrug Narayanan	2372	4.5	W4	W2	W3	W5	D6
2	IM Sean Nagle	2514	3.5	W5	L1	W4	W6	D3
3	NM Joseph Wan	2318	3.0	W6	W5	L1	D4	D2
4	NM Vaibhav Kalpaka	2206	2.0	L1	W6	L2	D3	D5
5-6	FM Leonard Johnson	2271	1.0	L2	L3	D6	L1	D4
	NM Okey Iwu	2235	1.0	L3	L4	D5	L2	D1

Minnesota State U2200 Play-Offs: March 24-26, 2023 @ Plymouth Crowne Plaza Hotel

<u>Place</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Total Pts</u>	<u>Round 1</u>	<u>Round 2</u>	<u>Round 3</u>	<u>Round 4</u>	<u>Round 5</u>
1	Ionatan Giurgiu	2130	3.5	W6	D5	D4	W2	D3
2	NM Tim Radermacher	2135	3.0	D4	D6	W3	L1	W5
3-4	Puwit Sky Moerlien	2101	2.5	D5	W4	L2	D6	D1
	Mike Schecter	2065	2.5	D2	L3	D1	D5	W6
5	David McNeil	2136	2.0	D3	D1	D6	D4	L2
6	NM Ethan Hunt	2169	1.5	L1	D2	D5	D3	L4

Minnesota State U2000 Play-Offs: March 24-26, 2023 @ Plymouth Crowne Plaza Hotel

<u>Place</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Total Pts</u>	<u>Round 1</u>	<u>Round 2</u>	<u>Round 3</u>	<u>Round 4</u>	<u>Round 5</u>
1	Eddie Wasserman	1978	4.5	D5	W3	W4	W6	W2
2	Bill Murray	1910	3.0	W3	D4	D6	W5	L1
3	Daniel Garrett	1947	2.5	L2	L1	W5	D4	W6
4	Kevin Landman	1808	2.0	D6	D2	L1	D3	D5
5-6	Michael Muff	1907	1.5	D1	D6	L3	L2	D4
	Michael Perry	1827	1.5	D4	D5	D2	L1	L3

Minnesota State U1700 Play-Offs: March 24-26, 2023 @ Plymouth Crowne Plaza Hotel

<u>Place</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Total Pts</u>	<u>Round 1</u>	<u>Round 2</u>	<u>Round 3</u>	<u>Round 4</u>	<u>Round 5</u>
1	Michael Haynes	1781	4.0	W2	W3	W6	W5	L4
2-4	Alexander Augustine	1796	3.0	L1	W6	W4	L3	W5
	Eric Jensen	1488	3.0	W4	L1	L5	W2	W6
	Kavish Kishore	1373	3.0	L3	W5	L2	W6	W1
5-6	Mike Benson	1548	1.0	L6	L4	W3	L1	L2
	Nikolas Slempe	1500	1.0	W5	L2	L1	L4	L3

FM Samrug Narayanan 2372 - NM Joseph Wan 2318 1-0

2023 Minnesota State Championship Playoffs, Plymouth, MN (3), 2023.03.25

B51: Sicilian, Canal-Sokolsky (Nimzowitsch-Rossolimo, Moscow) Attack

Comments by Tim Radermacher. Samrug was awarded the Brilliancy Prize for this game. It is a masterful demonstration of technique. Enjoy! **1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6**

3.♙b5+ ♘d7 4.O-O a6 5.♙d3 ♘gf6 6.♖e1 e6 7.c3 ♙e7 Some engines assess this position as equal, but white has the better practical chances due to the space advantage. **8.♙c2 b5 9.d4 ♙b7 10.♘bd2 ♗c7 11.a4 h6 12.e5 dxe5 13.dxe5 ♘d5**

Establishing the e5 bridgehead disrupts black's piece mobility and preserves long lines for white's connected bishop pair. **14.♘e4 c4 15.axb5 axb5 16.♖xa8+ ♙xa8**

17.♘g3 ♘c5 18.♘d4 ♗b6 19.h4 h5 20.♘e4 ♘xe4 21.♖xe4 ♘c7 22.♖e3 g6

23.g3 ♙d5 24.♖e1 ♗b7 25.♙e3 ♙f8 After much maneuvering white maintains a slight plus in the position...and about a 30 minute advantage on the clock. Black has 21 minutes to make the next 15 moves in a 30-second increment time control.

Not exactly intense time pressure. However, when you add it all up...black's position on the board, on the clock, and playing an FM...it is not a comfortable situation for NM Wan at this point. **26.♙g5 ♙g7 27.♗d2 O-O 28.♗f4 ♙c6 29.g4**

Samrug hits on the winning idea of busting open black's over-extended kingside while much of his firepower sits on the queenside of the board. **29...♘d5 30.♗g3**

hxg4 31.♗xg4 ♖e8 32.h5 gxh5 33.♗xh5 ♖a8 34.♙h6 ♙f8 35.♙xg7+ ♙xg7

36.♙h2 ♙f8 37.♖g1 Nxe6+ can be played straight-away and is decisive after fxe6 and Rg1. Samrug decides to play it a bit slower & safer...which is consistent with

the masterful technique he has demonstrated throughout this game. **37...♙e7**

38.♖g7 ♖f8 39.♗g5+ ♙e8 40.♘xe6 ♖h8+ 41.♙g3 ♗e7 42.♘d4 ♗xg5+

43.♖xg5 ♙d7 44.♘f5 ♙f8 45.♙e4 ♘c7 46.♘d4 ♖h3+ 47.♙f4 ♙e7 48.♖g3

♖h2 49.♙e3 ♘a6 50.♙c6 ♙xc6 51.♘xc6+ ♙d7 52.♘d4 ♘c5 53.♘b5 ♘d3

54.f4 ♖xb2 55.♘d6 ♖c2 56.♖g7 ♙e6 57.♖xf7 ♖xc3 58.♙d4 ♘xe5 59.fxe5

♖d3+ 60.♙e4 ♖d1 61.♖f6+ ♙e7 62.♘xc4 ♖e1+ 63.♘e3 ♖e2 64.♙d3 ♖e1

65.♘d5+ ♙d7 66.♖d6+ ♙e8 67.e6 ♖d1+ 68.♙e2 ♖b1 69.♖d7 ♖b2+ 70.♙d3

♖f2 71.♘c7+ With this masterful win Samrug concluded his "Super Saturday" of

the Playoffs with wins against the top two-rated players (besides himself) and moved to 3-0 heading into Sunday. **1-0**

Ionatan Giurgiu 2130 - Tim Radermacher 2136 1-0

MN Closed 2023 (U2200) (4),

C41: Philidor,Nimzowitsch,Larobok variation

**1.e4 d6 2.d4 ♘f6 3.♗c3 e5 4.♗f3 ♗bd7 5.♕c4 ♕e7 6.♗g5 O-O 7.♕xf7+ ♖xf7
8.♗e6 ♗e8 9.♗xc7 ♗d8 10.♗xa8 b5 11.f3 b4 12.♗e2 ♕b7 13.d5 ♕xa8 14.♕e3
♗c5 15.O-O ♗b8 16.b3 ♕d8 17.♗d2 a5 18.a3 bxa3 19.♖xa3 ♖b7 20.♖fa1
♖b4 21.♗c1 ♕b7 22.♕xc5 dxc5 23.♗d3 ♕b6 24.♔h1 ♗d8 25.c3 ♗xe4
26.fxe4 ♖xe4 27.c4 ♖d4 28.♗e3 e4 29.♗f2 ♕c7 30.♖e1 ♗d6 31.g3 ♕c8
32.♗xe4 ♗f8 33.♖a2 ♕f5 34.♗f2 ♕d7 35.♔g1 h5 36.♖d2 h4 37.♖xd4 cxd4
38.♗e7 hxg3 39.♗xf8+ ♔xf8 40.hxg3 ♕xg3 41.♖e4 ♕f5 42.♖xd4 ♕e5
43.♖d2 ♔e7 44.♔g2 ♕c3 45.♖e2+ ♔d7 46.♔f3 g6 47.♗e4 ♕b4 48.♖h2 ♔c7
49.♔e3 ♔b6 50.♔d4 ♕f8 51.c5+ ♔b5 52.♗d6+ ♔b4 53.♗xf5 ♕xc5+ 54.♔e5
gxf5 55.♖h3 a4 56.bxa4 ♔xa4 57.d6 f4 58.d7 ♕b6 59.♔xf4 ♕c7+ 60.♔e4
♔b5 61.♖h8 1-0 White wins.1-0**

Kavish Kishore 1373 - Michael Haynes 1781 1-0

2023 U1700 Playoffs, Plymouth, Minnesota (5), 2023.03.26

A57: Benko Gambit half Accepted

Notes by Tim Radermacher. The backstory for this game is Michael Haynes was 4-0 and had already clinched 1st prize in the U1700 section of the playoffs. With his prize pay-out he became the leading money winner on the 2023 Minnesota chess scene. Kavish Kishore is a 5th grader who is new to the Minnesota chess scene and has been having great success the past few months. **1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 3.d5 b5** The Benko Gambit from Haynes is probably not too surprising in that he really seems to want active piece play in his games. For the audience this game evidences several chess fundamentals which will be highlighted as they appear on the board. **4.cxb5 a6 5.b6 e6 6.dxe6 fxe6 7.♕f4 ♜xb6 8.♗d2 d5 9.♗gf3 ♕d6 10.♕xd6 ♜xd6** The first 10 moves favor Haynes as he gets his active piece play and a big center to boot. Black is better by 1/2 pawn per the engine. **11.e3 ♗bd7 12.♕d3 O-O 13.O-O a5 14.♕c2 ♜b6 15.♞b1 ♕a6 16.♞e1 c4 17.♗d4 e5 18.♗f5 e4 19.♗f1 ♜e6 20.♗1g3 ♗e5** After the second block of 10 moves Haynes maintains his 1/2 pawn advantage. However, note how white is being careful not to create weaknesses. 5 of his 6 pawns have not moved from their original square. Sure d3 is a big outpost for a black knight...but black did have to eternally weaken the d4 square to achieve this. **21.♗d4 ♜f7 22.h3 ♕c8 23.♗gf5 ♕xf5 24.♗xf5 ♗e8** Kavish has been patient...not creating extra weaknesses in his position...and now the patience is rewarded with an inaccuracy by Haynes that will enable Kavish to win a pawn. **25.♜xd5 ♜xd5 26.♗e7+ ♔h8 27.♗xd5 ♗d3 28.♕xd3 cxd3 29.♗b6 ♞a6 30.♗c4 ♗f6 31.♞ec1 ♞c8 32.♗e5 ♞e8 33.♗c4 ♞d8 34.♗d2** Blockading black's powerful connected passed pawn with a knight...generally considered the best piece for the work of blockading. **34...♞aa8 35.♞c4 ♞ac8 36.♞bc1 ♞xc4 37.♞xc4 h6 38.g4 ♞d5 39.♔f1 ♞b5 40.♗b3 ♞b4 41.♞xb4 axb4 42.♗c5 ♔g8 43.♗a6 ♗d5 44.h4 g5 45.hxg5 hxg5 46.♗c5 ♗f6 47.a4** Passed pawns must be pushed! Or, created and then pushed! It took Kavish a few moves to land on this winning strategy for his extra pawn / knight endgame. **47...bxa3 48.bxa3 ♔f7 49.a4 ♔e7 50.a5 ♔d6 51.a6 ♔xc5 52.a7 ♗d5 53.a8=♜ ♗c3 54.♜a7+ ♔c4 55.♔e1 ♔b3 56.♔d2 ♗b1+ 57.♔d1 ♗c3+ 58.♔c1 ♗b5 59.♜b7 ♔c3 60.♜c6+ ...and white went on to win. A very solid game by Kavish against a player rated 400 points higher. Also a good study in (1) not creating weaknesses, (2) being patient, (3) blockading with the knight, and (4) pushing passed pawns. **1-0****

Wan, Johnson & Kalpaka Share 130th Minnesota Open Chess Title

Minnesota's chess growth momentum continued at the 130th rendition of the Minnesota Open held February 10-12 in Plymouth. There were 200 participants across the 5 sections and this represented 12% growth on top of the great turn-out for this event in 2022.

In the Premier Section there was a 3-way tie for 1st prize at 4/5 points between NM Joseph Wan (Iowa), FM Leonard Johnson, and new NM Vaibhav Kalpaka. For Johnson this represented his 4th Minnesota Open title. This also provided a very exciting finish to his Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame Induction Weekend as he won his last 3 games after the induction ceremony was conducted on Saturday afternoon. For Kalpaka, this represented another exciting accomplishment in his first year competing on the Minnesota chess scene. These three co-champions, plus Dr. Okey Iwu (4th place on tiebreaks with 3.5 points), were invited to join defending State Champion Sean Nagle and Class Champion Samrug Narayanan in March's State Championship Playoffs.

The most outstanding performer in the tournament was likely Michael Perry who won the U2000 Amateur Section with a perfect 5-0 score. Perry raised his rating an astonishing 207 points in the process and jumped up to 1865 from 1658.

Other Section winners included Eric Jensen with 4.5/5.0 in the U1700, 5th grade phenom Kavish Kishore with a perfect 5-0 (and 177 rating point jump) in the U1400, and Nicholas Touchette with a perfect 5-0 (and 205 point provisional rating jump) in the U1100.

Many thanks to Chief TD Sarah Emmons and her Assistant TDs Jackson Wahl & Jenny Bourne for their excellent work with this well run event. They effectively managed the logistical challenges of having 5 tournament sections spread across 4 different playing rooms on 2 different levels of the hotel. No one is more excited than the TD Team about the MSCA having already reserved the "big" playing hall for the 2024 Minnesota Open enabling all of the sections to once again play in the same tournament space.

130th Annual MN OPEN: February 10-12, 2023 @ Plymouth Crowne Plaza Hotel**List of Top Finishers**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Total Pts</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Highlights</u>
Premier	NM Joseph Wan (Iowa)*	2314	4.0	1-3	3rd in Playoffs
	FM Leonard Johnson*	2262	4.0	1-3	Hall of Fame Inductee
	NM Vaibhav Kalpaka*	2153	4.0	1-3	8th Grader
Amateur	Michael Perry*	1658	5.0	1st	+207 Rating Points
	Medhat Feshir	1979	4.0	2-5	Lost to Perry
	Eddie Wasserman*	1979	4.0	2-5	Won U2000 Playoffs
	Michael Muff*	1900	4.0	2-5	Won Last 4 Games
	Kevin Landman*	1767	4.0	2-5	Lost to Feshir
Reserve	Eric Jensen*	1470	4.5	1st	Had Round 2 Draw
	Michael Haynes*	1597	4.0	2-3	Won U1700 Playoffs
	Nikolas Slempe*	1316	4.0	2-3	Undefeated
Sophomore	Kavish Kishore*	1195	5.0	1st	5th Grader
	Geoffrey Brustuen	1161	4.0	2-3	Lost to Kishore
	Suhaas Pothula	1187	4.0	2-3	Lost to Kishore
Bantam	Nicholas Touchette	1084	5.0	1st	2nd Tournament
	Benjamin Vandersluis	1017	4.5	2-3	+114 Rating Points
	Arun Senthilvel	1011	4.5	2-3	+78 Rating Points

** Denotes qualified for and played in March 24-26, 2023 Playoff Weekend*

2023 State Scholastic Championships

For the second consecutive year the state scholastic championships were held at the spacious University of St. Thomas. This site was once again wonderfully received by the almost 300 tournament participants and their coaches, parents, etc. A special congratulations to the MSCA Board for investing in this expensive but beautiful site for all of these scholastic players who represent the “future of Minnesota chess”. Many thanks as well to the TD Team of Jackson Wahl, Sarah Emmons, and Jenny Bourne for their dedicated efforts running a near flawless tournament.

The tournament results were a stark contrast between the unsurprising individual results where the highest rated players prevailed in each section, and the very surprising team results where the legendary Nicollet and Wayzata chess programs were finally de-throned (at least in part).

K-12 Section

Once again FM Samrug Narayanan found himself on Board 1 for the final round of the K-12 State Championship. In 2021, it was Sammy getting the last round win on-line to claim the title. Then in 2022, Linden Lee was able to turn the tables on Sammy over-the-board and complete his perfect 6-0 run to the State Championship. For 2023, Sammy matched up against his long-time scholastic friend/rival NM Nastassja Matus. Sammy leveraged the white pieces and a Marcozy Bind type set-up against Nastassja's Sicillian to win his 3rd high school championship in the last 4 years, finishing with a perfect 6-0 score.

The other top 6 finishers, all scoring 5/6 points, were David Schabert, Troy Cavanah, Nastassja Matus, Jordan Timm, and Nirav Singhal. These 5 players were invited to join Sammy for the Round-Robin Playoff at the Chess Castle on March 18-19 to determine the qualifier for the prestigious Denker National Tournament of High School Champions.

In the team competition, Eastview pulled off a stunning upset of Wayzata (coached by James Titus), bringing their streak of 6 consecutive state championships to an end. Eastview topped Wayzata by the slimmest of margins....1/2 point...when Nirav Singhal shocked Michael Perry in the last round. Perry was rated 453 points higher than Singhal and entered the tournament with significant momentum from his 5-0 performance in the Minnesota Open's Amateur Section a few weeks earlier. Congratulations to Coach Bob Dettmer and the entire Eastview Team on their championship! Taking 3rd place just 1-point off the lead was the emerging Jefferson squad...watch out for them next year!

K-8 Section

New NM Vaibhav Kalpaka won the K-8 State Championship with a score of 5.5/6.0 points. Vaibhav escaped with a Round 4 draw against Joshua Rajadurai in a game where Joshua clearly had the winning chances. After his Round 4 scare Vaibhav played a stellar Round 5, developed a mating attack against his opponent's king, and went on to defeat Arvind Thiagarajan, his closest competitor by rating (albeit 261 points lower). Tied for 2nd-4th place with 5.0/6.0 points were Arvind Thiagarajan, John Blomer, and

Vivian Yang. Joining these four in the Barber K-8 Playoffs based on their strong tiebreaks were Joshini Sudhakar and Aarti Kannan.

In the Team Competition, Minnetonka West exploded on to the chess scene with a stunning 16-point performance to become Co-Champions with Brian Ribnick's legendary Nicollet. Half of the Minnetonka West team's points were scored by the sister duo of Aarti Kannan (4.5 points) and Aditi Kannan (3.5 points). Minnetonka West only rostered 5 players compared with Nicollet's 21 players. Dakota Hills made a strong showing for the bronze with 14.5 points. For Brian Ribnick this Co-Championship represents his 37th Minnesota Middle School Team Championship!! Mr. Ribnick is an institution within the Minnesota Chess Community and very deserving of being the first scholastic coach inducted into the Minnesota Chess Hall of Fame back in 2019.

K-5 Section

33 players competed in the K-5 Section and the top two rated players both scored 4.5/5.0 points to become Co-Champions. Vihaan Pendse (1968) and Ajay Singamsetty (1764) both ceded draws to other players. This editor has competed against both Vihaan and Ajay in USCF-rated games and they are exceptionally strong players for their age. Both play with the kind of pace and courage that is a hallmark of today's scholastic masters. Vihaan and Ajay will get the chance to play a 2-game playoff for the right to represent Minnesota in the Annual Rockefeller National State Invitational Event. Tying for 3rd place with 4.0/5.0 points were Kavish Kishore, Varin Singhal, and Wilson Wang.

K-3 Section

There were 39 players competing in the Primary Section which is a great indication of both the popularity and prospects for Minnesota Chess. Two of these young players, William Ramirez & James Rasmussen, finished with perfect 4-0 scores to become the K-3 State Co-Champions.

Haring GK-12 State Championship

On April 8th, nine of Minnesota's best female chess players in grades K-12 competed in the 2023 GK-12 State Championship at the Castle Chess Site in Edina. NM Nastassja Matus scored a perfect 4/4 points to win the event and earn the opportunity to represent Minnesota in the Haring National Tournament of K-12 Girls State Champions. Strong performances were also put in by the Kannan sisters Aditi & Aarti. Aditi was the runner-up with 3/4 points after losing to Nastassja in the first round. Aarti finished with a very solid 2/4 points after drawing with 3rd-ranked Katie Lu and 2nd-ranked Vivian Yang before losing to Nastassja in the final round.

2023 State Scholastic Playoffs

This was the second year of the successful new format used to determine the Minnesota Representatives for the Denker & Barber Invitational Chess Tournaments. The top 6 finishers from the K-12 and K-8 state championship tournament held two weeks earlier were invited to participate. This year also featured a two-game classical time control head-to-head tie-breaker for the Rockefeller qualification. Vihaan Pendse and Ajay Singamsetty had tied for 1st place in the K-5 section of the state tournament. Vihaan played excellent patient chess to win both games against Ajay and will now represent Minnesota in this summer's K-5 Rockefeller Tournament which will be played in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Once again this year the two undefeated state champions, Samrug Narayanan in K-12 and Vaibhav Kalpaka in K-8, also went undefeated to prevail in the playoffs. Congratulations to Samrug who will represent Minnesota in the K-12 Denker and Vaibhav who will represent Minnesota in the K-8 Barber. Minnesota is building a strong team for the "State Nationals" thus far as they have qualified the highest rated chess player in each of the first four events.

2023 Minnesota State K-12 Denker Playoff: March 18-19 @ Chess Castle

Place	Name	Rating	Total Pts	RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4	RD 5
1	Samrug Narayanan	2365	5.0	W6	W5	W2	W4	W3
2	Alexander Augustine	1623	4.0	W3	W4	L1	W6	W5
3	Troy Cavanah	2109	3.0	L2	W6	W4	W5	L1
4	Jordan Timm	2066	1.5	W5	L2	L3	L1	D6
5	David Schabert	2121	1.0	L4	L1	W6	L3	L2
6	Nirav Singhal	1407	0.5	L1	L3	L5	L2	D4

2023 Minnesota State K-8 Barber Playoff: March 18-19 @ Chess Castle

Place	Name	Rating	Total Pts	RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4	RD 5
1	Vaibhav Kalpaka	2200	5.0	W6	W3	W2	W4	W5
2	Arvind Thiagarajan	1913	3.0	W3	W5	L1	W6	L4
3	John Blomer	1792	3.0	L2	L1	W4	W5	W6
4	Vivian Yang	1713	2.5	D5	W6	L3	L1	W2
5	Aarti Kannan	1347	1.0	D4	L2	D6	L3	L1
6	Joshini Sudhakar	1642	0.5	L1	L4	D5	L2	L3

2023 Winter Open Grows to 151 Players!

When 108 chess players showed up for the Winter Open in 2022 it marked the first time since the start of the pandemic that a Minnesota over-the-board chess tournament had more than 100 participants in attendance. That was both unexpected and awesome!! By the time 151 chess players showed up for the 2023 edition of the Winter Open (held at the comfortable Roseville Skating Center site) it had become evident that MINNESOTA CHESS IS BOOMING!! Multiple variables seem to be contributing to this Minnesota chess growth, including an exciting batch of new players, the preference for over-the-board play after all that pandemic on-line play, the famed Queen's Gambit Netflix series, and improved organization and communication from the MSCA Board.

Listed below are the highlights from the Winter Open which was successfully directed by Chief TD Dane Zagar and his Assistant TD Andy Grube.

2023 Winter Open: January 21-22, 2023 @ Roseville Skating Oval

List of Top Finishers

Section	Name	Rating	Total Pts	Place	Highlights
Open	NM Okey Iwu	2207	4.5	1-2	Start of Okey's Annual Playoff Run
	David Schabert	1994P17	4.5	1-2	Wow! David bursts on to the MN Chess Scene!
	NM Nastassja Matus	2113	4.0	3-4	Nastassja is back!
	Joel Nathe	2031	4.0	3-4	Just keeps getting better
U1800	Michael Haynes	1199P8	4.5	1st	+270 Rating Points!!
	Nathan Kangas	1733	4.0	2-3	Lost to Haynes in RD 5
	Shrinivas Iyer	1447	4.0	2-3	Won Last 4 games
U1300	Jaryd Traaholt	1129P20	5.0	1st	+174 Rating Points!!
	Shrivatsa Malladi	1257	4.5	2nd	Overcame RD 2 Draw
	Kavish Kishore	1094	4.0	Tied 3rd	Lost to Traaholt in RD 5

Jackson Wahl Prevails in the 2023 Chess Castle Club Championship!!

The Chess Castle Club Championship represents the annual jump start to Minnesota's prime chess season. With its trademark 7 rounds, G/60 d15 time control, and heavy Master/Expert participation, the event always feels (and is) somewhat frantic. There tends to be multiple players in contention for the title and the champion many times ends up feeling as much like a survivor as a champion.

The 2023 Championship, held on the first weekend of January at the new club site in Edina, did much to extend these tournament trends. In the end, Jackson Wahl prevailed by defeating Nastassja Matus in the final round to finish with 5.5/7.0 points. Kyler Weatherspoon was leading going into the last round after he defeated Jackson in Round 5. However, Okey Iwu defeated Kyler in the last round which provided Jackson with a path to the podium. Other strong tournaments were turned in by 8th Grader Vaibhav Kalpaka with 5/7 points and +17 rating points, Perry Zentner with 4/7 points and +52 rating points, and Ksenija Matus (USCF 1136) who gained 95 rating points sparked by her huge 1st round upset of Expert Eddie Wasserman.

Sarah Emmons served as Chief TD for the event.

2023 Chess Castle Championship: Jan 7-8, 2023 @ Castle Chess Club in Edina Players Finishing with 4.5+ out of 7.0 Points

Place	Name	Rating	Total Pts	RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4	RD 5	RD 6	RD 7
1	Jackson Wahl	2238	5.5	W19	W12	W5	W2	L3	D4	W10
2-4	Okey Iwu	2200	5.0	W17	D8	W6	L1	W15	D7	W3
	Kyler Weatherspoon	2191	5.0	D13	W28	W14	D4	W1	W6	L2
	Vaibhav Kalpaka	2096	5.0	D27	W16	W9	D3	W11	D1	D5
5-9	Tim Radermacher	2172	4.5	W20	W22	L1	W8	L6	W9	D4
	James Allen	2126	4.5	W21	W24	L2	W10	W5	L3	D8
	David McNeil	2120	4.5	H	L15	W20	W13	W12	D2	H
	Dane Zagar	2004	4.5	W18	D2	D10	L5	W19	W14	D6
	Dan Voje	1942	4.5	W29	D10	L4	W28	W14	L5	W15

Vaibhav Kalpaka: A young, new, instant sensation in Minnesota chess

Those of us of a certain age are accustomed to watching young players rise from talented novice to Expert or even Master -- sometimes in a slow but steady progression, and other times impressively quickly. We become familiar with their names as their rating eclipses ours.

But Vaibhav Kalpaka didn't follow that typical trajectory. The 8th grader burst forth suddenly -- an instant force to be reckoned with in Minnesota chess.

Since his first USCF tournament last September through April 1, Vaibhav has won (or tied for first) in an astonishing 11 of the 20 Minnesota events he's played in. He won the Castle Grand Opening Think ahead of 20 other players, won the November and the February Thinks as well, and the MLK Open, and the Quick event on Speedy Saturday -- just to name a few.

But his most impressive performance was at the 2023 Minnesota Open in February, when he won 4 out of 5 games to finish in a three-way tie for first in the Premier Division. That earned the then-13-year-old a spot in the Closed playoff for the Minnesota Championship.

Exploding from the gate with an initial USCF provisional rating of 1952, it didn't take him long to achieve the Master title.

So where did this young star come from? The answer: India.

Vaibhav (pronounced Why-bav) and his family moved to Plymouth from Bangalore last summer. Looking for a strong academic school, they choose the Wayzata School District, which by happenstance has been blessed with stellar chess players like GM Andrew Tang and National Masters Andrew Titus and Nastassja Matus, who is also a Woman FIDE Master.

Vaibhav learned chess long before his move to Minnesota. He initially was taught by his father Robinjith, who goes by "Robin." A casual player, Robin quickly surmised that his son had talent for the game and found group lessons for him.

Vaibhav's first coach, Sushrutha Reddy, who runs a chess academy in Bangalore, sounds like he's a fantastic coach.

"He's the one who developed my passion in chess," Vaibhav said. "His teaching style was very fun for us. So I really enjoyed coming to his classes." The coach's entertaining stories about chess history and world champions, and his memorable teachings, made the classes "quite fun." One example: When Reddy taught his students about the power of two rooks on the 7th rank, he called them "pigs, because they eat up all the pawns," Vaibhav said.

Vaibhav began playing in FIDE-rated tournaments around age 7, and he traveled to a couple of overseas tournaments -- in the Czech Republic and Thailand (for the Commonwealth Championship). Around age 10, Vaibhav's coach recognized that Vaibhav had outgrown him and recommended a stronger coach. Eventually, Vaibhav took online lessons for about a year from a grandmaster from Georgia (the country), but those lessons ended nearly three years ago, and he's been studying on his own since then.

Like all players, Vaibhav lost nearly two years of over-the-board play – and a chance for continued rating progress -- due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

When he moved to Minnesota in August last year, Vaibhav eagerly plunged into the Minnesota chess scene – and did so with a big splash. He won just the second event he played in – the Castle Grand Opening Think in September. And the third – the National Chess Day Rapid.

Despite his accomplishments, Vaibhav remains humble. His dad said Vaibhav won't let them notify his school about the events, trophies and prize money he has won. And his parents said that before they sat down with the Minnesota Chess Journal for an interview, Vaibhav asked them not to embarrass him by saying how proud they are of him or to use words like “exceptional.” (Note to Vaibhav: That's what parents are *supposed* to do!)

As proof of his modest nature Vaibhav, unbidden, offers up two self-criticisms: He claims that “sometimes I'm a bit lazy,” and “I play too quickly.” But it sounds like the chess laziness was mostly during the pandemic shutdown – and who can't relate to that? When OTB tournaments resumed, he “started to work more on my chess, and the results showed,” he acknowledged.

As a school attendee, Vaibhav typically plays only in weekend tournaments, not evening events at the Chess Castle. But the Monday Action Quad on Feb. 27 was an exception. That's because Vaibhav had recently learned that in the U.S., a 2200 rating earns the life-long Master title.

With his regular USCF rating at 2192, and his 14th birthday less than a week away, Vaibhav asked his dad if he could play in those Monday Quads. Permission was granted, and Vaibhav delivered, winning all three games and pushing his rating up to 2205. Mission accomplished!

Vaibhav says he really likes the Minnesota chess scene. Tournament playing halls tend to be spacious, and the chess community is “close-knit” and welcoming, especially at the Chess Castle, he said. He appreciates the post-game analyses and indulges in “quite a lot of blitz between rounds.”

If the description “helicopter parents” applies to some chess parents, it clearly does not apply to Robin and Shilpasri, who goes by “Shilpa.” He says his parents are supportive and encouraging about his chess, but “they don't really put any pressure on me.”

Away from the board, Vaibhav has a variety of other interests. He enjoys playing basketball and soccer for fun, likes to swim, and is a voracious reader of all genres -- autobiographies, biographies, fiction, science -- and watching movies. His mom says he's also a “foodie.” He enjoys sampling different cuisines and helping her cook. “He tells me when something is good, when something is not. He coaches me,” Shilpa says, laughing.

Meanwhile, as winner of both the Minnesota K-8 Scholastic Championship (open) and the playoff for the top six K-8 finishers, he will represent Minnesota in the Dewain Barber National Tournament of Middle School State Champions, to be held in conjunction with the U.S. Open in Michigan this summer.

He already has demonstrated that he can hold his own against the best 8th graders in the country. At the 8th Grade National Championship in Maryland in December, he finished in a tie for 2 through 6, just a half point behind the winner.

Asked whether he has any particular chess ambitions, the youngster says he hasn't set any specific goals. "I'm not really aiming for a title," Vaibhav said. "I just want to enjoy the game."

-- *Article by Dennis J. McGrath*

Vaibhav Kalpaka (2200) - Vivian Yang (1800) [B52]
K-8 Playoffs Chess Castle of Minnesota (Rnd 4), 19.03.2023

Annotations by Vaibhav Kalpaka

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.Bb5+ Bd7 4.Bxd7+ Qxd7 5.c4 I believe this is the best way to fight for an advantage for white, if white tries c3 and d4, black will promptly counter him in the center. For example:

[5.0-0 Nf6 6.Re1 Nc6 7.c3 e6 8.d4 cxd4 9.cxd4 d5 10.e5 Ne4 11.Nbd2 Nxd2 12.Bxd2 leads to nothing for white.]

5...Nf6 6.Nc3 Nc6 7.d4 cxd4 8.Nxd4 g6 9.f3 Bg7 10.Be3 Rc8

[10...0-0 I like playing in this way for black 11.0-0 a6!? After this interesting positions arise 12.Rc1 (12.Na4 Qc7 13.Nxc6 bxc6 14.Qc2 Nd7; 12.a4 Qc7 13.b3 e6 14.Rc1 Nd7) 12...Nxd4 13.Bxd4 b5]

11.0-0 0-0 12.b3 e6 This is part of theory but I find it hard to play for black

13.Rc1

Rc1 is not a bad continuation, but a more precise alternative is Qd2 (protecting the bishop). In fact, I actually mixed up my theory, playing Rc1 instead of Qd2.

[13.Qd2 d5 (13...Rfd8 14.Rad1 a6 15.Na4) 14.cxd5 exd5 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.e5 Ne8 17.Bc5 Bxe5 18.Bxf8 Kxf8 19.Rae1 Bd6+/- With better chances for white]

13...d5?!

I feel Rfd8 is better and highlights the reason Rc1 is imprecise. [13...Rfd8 14.Re1 a6 15.Nxc6 Rxc6 16.Qd3 Qc7 Black is solid, if the queen was placed on d2 the rook would have a good spot on d1 and white needn't worry about future d5 ideas]

14.cxd5!?

[14.Nxc6! bxc6 15.e5 Ne8 16.f4 f6 17.Bc5 Rf7 18.Qe2+/-]

14...exd5 15.Nxc6 bxc6 16.e5 Nh5?

[16...Qe7 17.f4 Nd7 18.Re1+/- Easier to play for white]

17.g4! Bxe5 18.gxh5 Qh3

[18...d4 19.Bh6 Qh3?! 20.f4! Qe3+ 21.Kg2 dxc3 22.Bxf8 Bxf4 23.Ba3+/-]

19.Rf2 d4 20.Bxd4 Rfd8 21.Bxe5!

[21.Ne2?? Bxd4 22.Nxd4 c5 23.Qf1 Qxf1+ 24.Kxf1 Rxd4 25.Rfc2]



Position after 21.Bxe5, inviting Black to capture the White queen on d1

21...Rxd1+ 22.Rxd1 Qxh5?! 23.Bf6 Weaving a net against the black king with the knight coming to cement the bishop next

23...Qf5 24.Ne4 h5 25.Rfd2 Qxf3?! 26.Rd8+! Kh7 27.Ng5+ 1-0

Twin Cities Chess League Grows – Plans Return to Division Format

Responding to our call for action, participation in the 2022-2023 TCCL Season grew to 22 teams, seven more than the previous year. The final night showcased an awards ceremony (with the reintroduction of actual hardware prizes!), recognition for other exceptional performances, a blitz tournament, casual chess, and pizza. While the road back to pre-pandemic levels is long, and some of the details for the coming 2023-2024 Season are yet to be tweaked, this growth has enabled the League to make a commitment of returning to the traditional multiple-division format. In one sense, this division format, together with the four board positions per team, constitutes the real soul of the League, allowing participants to square off against not too dissimilarly matched opponents, resulting in tighter, tougher, and more interesting games, and hopefully a better chess experience for everyone. In addition, extra divisions translate to extra prizes.

We already have achieved ample participation for two divisions, but with just a few more teams entering, we can form a third division, leaving us just one step away from the four divisions of the pre-pandemic League. For all but the lowest (Open) division, we will return to a round robin format, whereby teams will know their pairings, and can thus make appropriate plans well in advance. But we still need your help!! In order to effect this expansion harmoniously, we will need more information, and need it earlier. Once divisions are set up, the transitions to the following year become simpler and more consistent. However, their initial creation is logistically far more complex. The League is tentatively scheduled to resume at the Castle Chess Club in September, so time is short. For the established teams, please let us know as soon as you can that you will be returning for another Season. For others, now is the time to start forming your teams, and keeping us in the loop. Individuals who currently do not belong to a team but would like to participate should contact us as well, so that we might assist in finding you a team. Keep your eye on the website, as there will be more to come.

The fight among the 13 teams eligible for the top under 1500 prize was overshadowed by this Season's Cinderella performer, Uptown Funk, initially ranked only 13th by average rating. By capturing one of the League's overall top prizes (more on that later), Funk left the other 12 teams to duel it out for that honor. When the dust had cleared, The Art of War had won 4.0 out of the possible 6.0 match points, and edged out runner-up Ministry of Silly Moves in tiebreak by two game points. Demonstrating a true Swiss gambit as part of its war art, the team inauspiciously began the Season with two losses before rallying to finish with four straight victories.

The individual board prize medal haul by members of under 1500 teams can best be highlighted by one amazing result: All four of the gold medals for top overall board performance went to

players on under 1500 teams. Those who would dismiss this as the consequence of easier pairings will be hard-pressed to explain Uptown Funk's having played the 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th highest ranked teams, clearly the toughest schedule of any participant. With this top spot creating an opening for another under 1500 medalist, the Board 1 honor went to Nick Slemph of Funk's cousin team, Uptown Punk, with 3.5 points, who edged out The Art of War's Jack Bellinger on head-to-head tiebreak. On Board 2, David Greenstein of Law & Worms grabbed the under 1500 medal with 4.0 points. The Board 3 under 1500 contest ended with a tie between Eddie Reinhardt of UMTC Maroon and Brandon Richardwebster of the Art of War, both with 3.0 points. A seven-way tie at 3.0 points for the Board 4 under 1500 medal was ultimately decided through a playoff victory by Jorge Devia-Medina of We Used to be Good over runner-up Thomasz Kaczynski of Ministry of Silly Moves.

The battle for this Season's League Champion may have ended with some predictable results, but no one would have remotely guessed the road that was taken getting there. Last year's champion Had to Do It returned with its top ranking, along with MCJ4, a slightly amended version of last year's runner-up on tiebreak, Back from the 80's, now with the 2nd highest ranking. Law & Worms and perennial powerhouse A-Team rounded out the top four seeds. The only serious threat posed by Uptown Funk, which had finished the previous Season with an indifferent 2.5 out of 7.0 match points, was a possible run at the under 1500 prize. Or so we all thought.

That thought held on at first. In Round 1, Funk eked out a narrow 2.5 victory against 15th ranked The Art of War. That was expected. But in Round 2, Funk upset the 5th ranked Rochester Knights, this time with a more decisive 3.0 points. Still, there was no need to panic, as they hadn't yet faced one of the "big guns." For Round 3, MCJ4 was happy to see Had to Do It paired against the ever tough A-Team, while it was gifted the "easy" down-pairing to Funk. Once the match began, MCJ4 was also pleased to see Had to Do It struggle and eventually lose in a very tight match. Perhaps they instead should have been watching their own boards more closely. Funk never let up, and ground out another 2.5 point victory. In Round 4, the conqueror of last year's champion became the latest victim of this Season's juggernaut, as the A-Team also fell to Funk in another close match.

This left Uptown Funk all alone in first place by a full match point, with only two matches left to go. On top of that, they had already played the 2nd, 4th and 5th highest ranked teams. What could go wrong? Well, they would next have to play the top seed, and while a win or draw there would all but guarantee the champion's title, a loss would place them in a difficult position. Having played so many tough teams with close scores, Funk was well behind in tie-breaking game points, and would thus have to stay ahead in match points in order to prevail. An easy pairing in the final round would be unlikely to assist in this goal. This critical 5th Round match turned

out to be a bit anti-climactic. This time Had to Do It lived up to its name, and gave no quarter, winning with a decisive 4.0. In the final Round 6, Funk was paired against the 8th ranked Rabid Rooks, but by this time no one was calling Funk the “underdog,” and they coasted in with a 3.0 point victory. The A-Team was paired down to Law & Worms, which held them to a draw, knocking them out of contention for a 1st or 2nd place finish. All eyes were then on Had to Do It vs. MCJ4. Curiously, while a win for either team would secure the League title, a draw would allow Funk to sneak back up to 1st place. MCJ4 hoped for a repeat of the previous Season’s match-up, where Back from the 80’s secured a narrow victory complete with crazy time scrambles. It looked as if it might happen again, as MCJ4 obtained 1.5 points on the lower two boards, but the time scrambles of Boards 1 and 2 both ended decisively with Okey Iwu and Dane Zagar prevailing, and the Championship being retained by Had to Do It. Uptown Funk had to be satisfied with the 2nd place prize, losing out on the game point tiebreak.

The Board 1 gold medal went to Eric Bell for his perfect 5.0 points out of five games played, topping Nate Hoover on head-to-head tiebreak. This is believed to be the first time in many decades that the Board 1 gold medal in the top division (this Season, the only division) went to a non-master. The significance of this performance to Uptown Funk’s final placement (which could have easily been the Championship title) is shown by noting that had Eric’s games all gone the other way, Uptown Funk would not have won a single match. The Board 2 contest produced the only 6.0 performance of the League by Michael Perry, who bested the field by 2.0 points. The silver medal was awarded to Bert Wilson of the A-Team and Stan Kegel of Ministry of Silly Moves, both tied with 4.0 points. On Board 3, the gold medal was won by Freiberg of Crusty Bread with 3.5 points, and the silver medal by Paul Kinion of Rochester Knights with 3.0 points. Board 4 gold medal honors went to Ed Bourgois of The Art of War, while the silver medal was shared by Jackson Daly of Uptown Funk and Dan Voje of Had to Do It, both with 3.5 points.

Below is a game from the critical Round 5 match between the then leading Uptown Funk, and the defending League champions Had to Do It. This match represented the turning point of the Season. The game well exemplifies Dr. Iwu’s characteristic stubbornness over the board, where he gradually but steadily erodes his opponent’s last vestiges of hope.

TCCL - Round 5

White : James Allen USCF 2100 - Uptown Funk

Black Okey Iwu USCF 2235 - Had to Do It

{NM James Allen was a very strong junior player in the 1990's, reaching a peak USCF rating of 2341(!) during that period. He took a long break from competitive chess, but has been a bit more active in the past few years.

In this game, from Round 5 of the 2022-2023 Twin Cities Chess League, he is on Board 1, representing the Cinderella team of the event, "Uptown Funk". They were leading the field with a perfect score of 4/4. Meanwhile, my team, "Had To Do It!!!!", was trailing Uptown Funk by a match point. We understood that we needed to win this match to remain relevant in the fight for first place.}

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e5 Ne7 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.Qg4

{"Do you mind if I pick off your g-pawn?"}

7...Kf8!?

{"Yes, I do, actually!"}

8.h4 Qa5 9.Bd2 Qa4 10.Kd1

(10.Rh3 {This "caveman" approach is definitely more critical.})

10...Nbc6 11.Nf3 b6 12.h5 h6

{After this move, I had spent 8 minutes out of my initial 90.}

13.Qf4

{James had spent 22 minutes after this move.}

13...Ba6!?

{I was strategically rolling the dice here, hoping he wouldn't force a queen exchange.}

14.Bxa6?!

(14.dxc5 Qxf4 15.Bxf4 Bxf1 16.Rxf1 -)

14...Qxa6 =+ 15.g4

{"Charge!" James is an aggressive attacking player, so I expected this move to appear, sooner than later!}

15...Rc8 16.g5 hxg5 17.Qxg5 Nf5 18.Rg1 Qc4 19.Nh4

{Time remaining for White = 31 minutes.}

19...Nce7

{Time remaining for Black = 59 minutes. At this juncture, I felt I had built a decent advantage on the board, to go with my advantage on the clock. The latter advantage increased further, after White went into "the tank", and spent 20 minutes on:}

20.Rg4 Ke8!

{My king has become bored with his role as "Sitting Duck" in this theatrical production, and strolls over to the queenside. Rumor has it, the R@h8 may have also given the king a helpful nudge in the right direction :-)}

21.Nxf5 Nxf5 22.dxc5

{With 4 minutes left on his clock, to Black's 51 minutes, the position is opening up, but not to White's advantage.}

22...Qf1+ 23.Be1 Rxc5 24.Ra4 Rc7 25.Rb1

{Down to his last minute, White is trying to create any threat he can muster.}

25...Kd7! 26.c4 dxc4 27.Qd2+ Kc6!?

(27...Kc8 28.Rxb6? {was what I was avoiding. However:} 28...c3! { chess is not checkers, and you are not compelled to immediately capture an offered piece!}

(28...axb6? 29.Ra8+ Kb7 30.Rxh8 =+)

29.Qe2 Rd8+ 30.Rd6 Qxe2+ 31.Kxe2 Nxd6 32.exd6 Rxd6 -+)

28.Rbb4 Kb7 29.Kc1 Rhc8 30.Qc3 Qe2

{I had about 37 minutes left, and was trying to decline my opponent's invitation to join him in "blitz mode".}

31.Kb2 Ne7

0-1

{White resigned with 10 seconds left on his clock.

"Had To Do It!!!!" won this match 4-0, setting up a final round showdown with MCJ4. If either team won, they would be crowned champion. However, if there was a draw in that match, there were two other teams (A-Team and Uptown Funk) waiting in the wings for coronation as TCCL champs. A dramatic final round was in store!

TCCL 2022-2023 Season

Final Standings

Paring #	Team	Avg Rating	RD1	RD2	RD3	RD4	RD5	RD6	Match Pts	Game Pts
1	Had to Do It	2098	W11 (4)b	W7 (2.5)w	L4 (1.5)b	W6 (4)w	W13 (4)b	W2 (2.5)b	5.0	18.5
13	Uptown Funk	1303	W15 (2.5)w	W5 (3)b	W2 (2.5)b	W4 (2.5)w	L1 (0)w	W8 (3)b	5.0	13.5
4	A-Team	1930	W12 (3)w	W8 (3)b	W1 (2.5)w	L13 (1.5)b	W5 (3)w	D3 (2)b	4.5	15.0
2	MCJ4	2038	W10 (4)w	W6 (3.5)b	L13 (1.5)w	W7 (2.5)b	W8 (3.5)b	L1 (1.5)w	4.0	16.5
15	The Art of War	1174	L13 (1.5)b	L11 (1)w	W21 (4)w	W19 (3.5)b	W6 (2.5)b	W16 (4)w	4.0	16.5
14	Ministry of Silly Moves	1193	L6 (1)w	W19/21 (4)w	L7 (0)b	W22 (3)b	W11 (3)w	W5 (3.5)b	4.0	14.5
3	Law & Worms	1976	L16 (1.5)b	W18 (3)w	W11 (3)b	L8 (1.5)w	W12 (4)b	D4 (2)w	3.5	15.0
9	Saint Paul Chess Enthusiasts	1587	D18 (2)w	L16 (0)b	L10/18 (1)b	W17 (2)b	W22 (2.5)w	W7 (2)w	3.5	9.5
18	Uptown Punk	922	D9 (2)b	L3 (1)b	D9/10 (2)w	L12 (1.5)b	W20 (4)b	W19 (3)	3.0	13.5
11	We Used to be Good	1420	L1 (0)w	W15 (3)b	L3 (1)w	W16 (4)w	L14 (1)b	W6 (3)w	3.0	12.0
8	Rabid Rooks	1618	W19 (4)w	L4 (1)w	W22 (2.5)b	W3 (2.5)b	L2 (0.5)w	L13 (1)w	3.0	11.5
5	Rochester Knights	1799	W20 (4)b	L13 (1)w	W16 (3)w	W10 (2.5)b	L4 (0)b	L14 (0.5)w	3.0	11.0
16	UMTC Maroon	1099	W3 (2.5)w	W9 (4)w	L5 (1)b	L11 (0)b	W7 (2.5)w	b15	3.0	10.0
10	Ham Saemisch	1443	L2 (0)b	D17 (2)w	W9/18 (3)b	L5 (1.5)w	D19 (2)w	D12 92)w	2.5	10.5
12	Pawn Island of Misfits	1397	L4 (1)b	W20 (3)w	L6 (0)b	W18 (2.5)w	L3 (0)w	D10 (2)b	2.5	8.5
7	UMTC Gold	1629	W17 (3)w	L1 (1.5)b	W14 (3)w	L2 (1.5)w	L16 (1.5)b	L9 (0)b	2.0	10.5
6	Ad Hoc All Stars	1661	W14 (3)b	L2 (0.5)w	W12 (4)w	L1 (0)b	L15 (1.5)w	L11 (1)b	2.0	10.0
20	Armstrong Falcons	597	L5 (0)w	L12 (1)b	L19 (1)b	W21 (3)b	L18 (0)w	W22/21 (3)	2.0	8.0
22	Uptown Skunks	UNR	1/2 Bye	1/2 Bye	L8 (1.5)w	L14 (1)w	L9 (1.5)b	W20/21 (3)	2.0	7.0
19	Crusty Bread	669	L8 (0)b	L14/21 (1)b	W20 (3)w	L15 (0.5)w	D10 (2)b	L18 (1)b	1.5	7.5
17	UMTC Gophers	1079	L7 (1)b	D10 (2)b	U	L9 (1)w	D21 (1)b	U	1.0	5.0
21	YEL	UNR	U	L14/19 (1)b	L15 (0)b	L20 (1)w	D17 (1)w	L20/22 (0)	0.5	3.0

1st Place

2nd Place

Top U1500

Average Rating based on pre-registration if available, otherwise based on 4 players present for Round 1. Unrated players rated at 1000 for average team rating calc.

Chess Castle Club Report – January through April 2023

With the beginning of a new year was the beginning of a new year of chess! Chalk it up to new year's resolutions or the current chess boom, but attendance jumped at the Club compared to the latter months of 2022. While some events did struggle, Monday night and weekend Quad events continue to be the biggest draw. One of the most impressive factoids from the early months of 2023 was how 30 different individuals won or tied for first in a Monday Action Quad! Equally noteworthy and worth drawing special attention to was Eddie Wasserman showing at the top of all the leaderboards, from Action Quads to weekend Swiss events. Congratulations to stalwart Jackson Wahl for his victory in this year's iteration of the Club Championship!

– submitted by Ethan Hunt

Results through 4/30/2023

Monday Action Quad Leaders

Eddie Wasserman	5.16
James Allen	4.33
Michael Haynes	4.33

Tuesday Night Leaders

Eddie Wasserman	4.33
Jackson Wahl	3.0

Thursday Knighter Winners

January Open– Kevin Landman, Katie Lu
January Premier – Nathan Hoover
February Open – Nathan Hoover
February Premier – Ronen Agam
March Open – Eric Gahlon
March Premier – Nathan Hoover
April Open – Katie Lu
April Premier – Eddie W, Arvind T

Exerciser Quad Leaders

David McNeil	1.33
Eddie Wasserman	1.33

Other Club Events

2023 Castle Championship	Jackson Wahl	5.5/7.0
The Warm-up Rapid	Jackson Wahl, Vaibhav Kalpaka	4.0/5.0
Old Guys Tornado	Eddie Wasserman	3.0/4.0
February Think	Vaibhav Kalpaka, David McNeil	6.0/7.0
Spring Rapid	Jackson Wahl	5.0/5.0
March Speedy Saturday	Vaibhav Kalpaka	4.0/4.0
April Fools' Tornado	Vihaan Pendse, Jordan Timm	3.5/4.0
April Speedy Saturday	John Blomer	3.5/4.0
Earth Day Rapid	Jackson Wahl	5.0/5.0
April Think	Medhat Feshir	5.5/7.0

Rochester Chess Report

While the USCF records indicate relatively few events being held in Rochester during early 2023, that has not had any impact on turnout! Every event held garnered more than 20 attendees. Below is the crosstable for the Winter Swiss event. Looking ahead to this summer, the Rochester Open is being held on July 8th-9th at the Mayo Civic Center and is one of the events in the MSCA Summer Grand Prix. All the more reason to attend!

2023 Winter Swiss

Place	Name	Rating	Total Pts	RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4
1-2	Kevin Gaustad	1791	4.0	W5	W12	W4	W3
	Michael Gilligan	Unr	4.0	W20	W11	W15	W8
3-6	Matt Jensen	2233	3.0	W7	W9	W8	L1
	Isaac Aganbegovic	Unr	3.0	W16	W18	L1	W10
	Andy Ott	1005P	3.0	L1	W22	W18	W9
	Vankatesh Bellamkonda	728P	3.0	W10	L15	W19	W12
7	Jamison Thorne	1253	2.5	L3	H-	W23	W19
8-14	Timothy Schimke	1569	2.0	W13	W19	L3	L2
	Paul Kinion	1300	2.0	W21	L3	W16	L5
	Alejandro Decaire	1305P	2.0	L6	W21	W11	L4
	Bob Frisby	1078	2.0	W23	L2	L10	W21
	James Bajzer	Unr	2.0	W22	L1	W14	L6
	William Strain	Unr	2.0	L8	L14	W17	B-
	Colin Severson	331P	2.0	L19	W13	L12	B-
15-17	Daniel Garrett	1969	1.5	H-	W6	L2	U-
	Ethan Kaske	Unr	1.5	L4	W20	L9	H-
	Matthew Markland	743	1.5	L18	D23	L13	W22
18-22	Jai Knuth	1302	1.0	W17	L4	L5	U-
	Steve Lange	1187	1.0	W14	L8	L6	L7
	Wilson Wang	948	1.0	L2	L16	L21	B-
	Robert Richardson	670	1.0	L9	L10	W20	L11
	Sanvitha Vallurupalli	681P	1.0	L12	L5	B-	L17
	23	Roy Knuth	1700	0.5	L11	D17	L7

Twin Ports Report

The Twin Ports club has been hopping in early 2023, including their big Martin Luther King event which was held in conjunction with the Chess Castle. In addition to the MLK event, a club rapid championship (G20, D3) for the first time. The crosstable for that event is below.

Twin Ports Rapid Championship

Place	Name	Rating	Total Pts	RD 1	RD 2	RD 3	RD 4	RD 5	RD 6
1	Oke Iwu	2176	6.0	W3	W4	W7	W2	W6	W10
2	Brenton Decker	1700	4.0	W9	D3	W4	L1	W8	D6
3	Cody Roberts	1470	3.5	L1	D2	W8	W9	L4	W11
4-5	Sean Zentrich	1597	3.0	W10	L1	L2	W6	W3	L8
	Adam Graupe	1350	3.0	U-	U-	U-	W11	W10	W9
6	Jereme Marholtz	1497	2.5	W11	L7	W9	L4	L1	D2
7-10	Ron Decker	1823	2.0	W8	W6	L1	U-	U-	U-
	Allen Hawley	1450	2.0	L7	W11	L3	L10	L2	W4
	Richard Lauger	1415	2.0	L2	W10	L6	L3	W11	L5
	Denis Matic	1363	2.0	L4	L9	W11	W8	L5	L1
11	Calvin Wilcox	1272P	0.0	L6	L8	L10	L5	L9	L3

STAT CORNER

This recurring feature in the MCJ is brought to you by MN Chess Hall of Famer Joe Longen, who is the keeper of an impressive array of Minnesota chess history and statistics.

List of Minnesota Scholastic National Champions

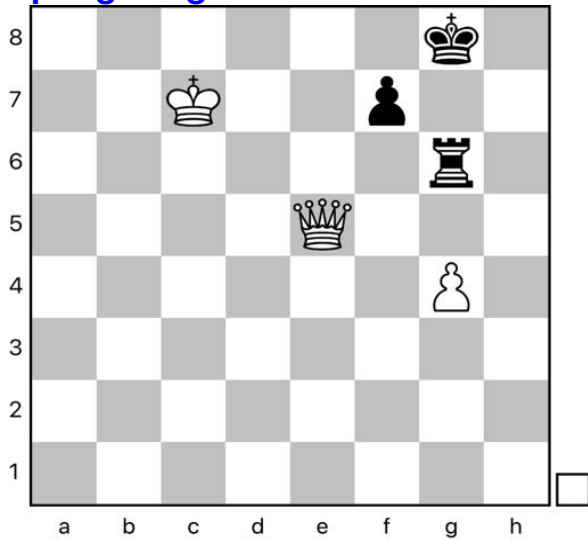
#	Player	Year	Level
1	Joe Longen	1978	K-6
2	Tim Radermacher	1979	K-6
3	Alex Feldman	1990	K-12
4	James Allen	1993	K-8
5	Victor Feldberg	1999	K-8
6	John Bartholomew	2001	K-9
7	Reed Sorensen	2002	K-9
8	John Bartholomew	2002	K-12
9	Matt Dahl	2008	K-8
10	Kevin Bu	2008	K-9
11	Prashanth Amarasinghe	2010	K-12
12	Andrew Tang	2016	K-12
13	Andrew Tang	2017	K-12

A very interesting list! Minnesota has a long history of scholastic chess success on the National level. If there are 3 National Championships per year (Elementary, Middle School & High School) that means there have been 135 Championships over these last 45 years. Instead of winning 2% of those championships as 1 of the 50 states, Minnesotans have won 13 championships or a remarkable 10%. Five times what one might expect!! In subsequent MCJ's Joe will interview these former National Champions to find out what they have been up to in chess and life since winning their championship.

BILL'S ENDGAME CORNER

This editor originally met Bill Murray at Thursday Night Chess in the North Suburban Chess League back in 1981 when it used to meet at North Hennepin Community College. Over the last 40 years that I have known Bill, it has been my observation that he has been a constant on the Minnesota chess scene and one of the most solid chess players I have encountered. In the last few years I have noticed Bill's unique talent for both getting into and succeeding with interesting endgames. This column features some of the interesting endgames Bill has played or studied from recent chess events. All of the notes are from Bill. Enjoy!

Spring endgame 1 - ?

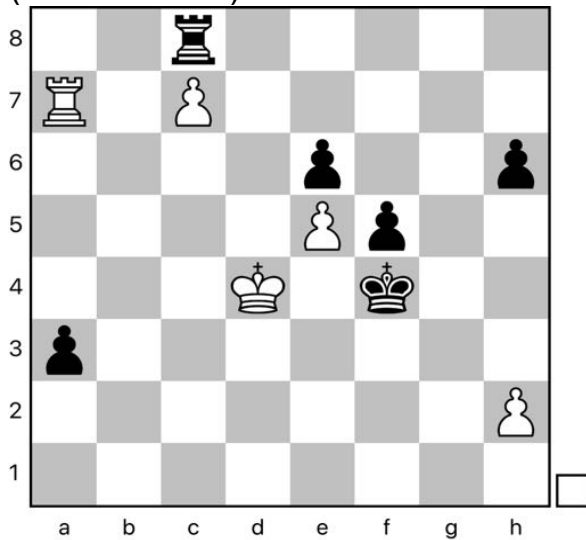


[#] Without the White pawn this would be a draw. Black just moves his rook from g6 to e6 and White can not get behind or into the fortress. **1.g5 ♖e6 2.♗f6!! ♔f8**
2...♜xf6 3.gxf6 ♔h7 4.♔d7 ♔g6 5.♔e7+-
3.♔d8 ♔g8 4.♔d7 ♜e1 5.g6 after some checks Black will have to take the pawn.
5...fxg6 6.♗xg6+ and of course we have all studied this ending.:-) *

Lee,Alice 2362 - Krush,Irina 2432 1/2-1/2

American Cup Women Champions 2023,Saint Louis (3.2),2023.03.22

(Annotator: TA)



54. ♖c5!+- 1s [#] Kd6 would kill now.**54...** ♕xe5 38s **55.** ♖c6 7s **55...** f4 73s

56. ♖xa3 67s Intending Kb7 and mate.**56...** ♖f5 179s **57.** ♖a5+? 62s

the GMs were totally confused by this endgame but agreed that Kb7 must be played.**57.** ♖b7+- ♖g8 Short of time who would play this? White wants to take on with the King on c7 **58.** ♖a8

58.c8=♚ ♖xc8 59.♖xc8 e5 60.♖d7 e4 61.♖d6 loses for White.

61.♖a5+ ♖g4 62.♖e5 e3 63.♖e6 ♖f3 64.♖f5 e2 65.h4 ♖f2 66.♖xf4 e1=♚

67.♖xe1 ♖xe1

61...e3

61...f3

62.♖a5+ ♖e4

58...♖g7 59.♖c6 ♖xc7+ 60.♖xc7 White can stop the pawns

57... ♖e4? 144s Played with one second left for Krush

57... e5? 58.♖b7 ♖g8 59.♖a8+-

57... ♖g4=

58. ♖d6? 36s

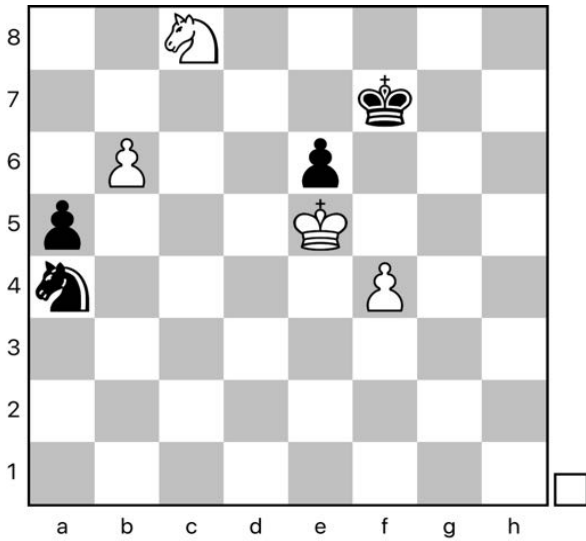
Better is 58.♖b7+- ♖xc7+ 59.♖xc7

58... f3= 64s Threatens to win with ...f2.The position is equal.**59.** ♖e5+ 51s

59... ♖d3 24s **60.** ♖xe6 14s **60...** ♖xc7 34s **61.** ♖xc7 7s KR-KPP **61...** f2 4s 1/2-1/2

Spring endgame 3 - ? 1-0

2023.04.04



[#] It would be hard to calculate to the end of this position. Thinking strategically and knowing some endgame plans make it a step by step task. **1. ♖d4**

Seeing that this fails makes us look for another plan. **1. b7 ♗c5 2. b8=♚ ♗d7+**

1... ♗xb6 2. ♗xb6 ♕f6 3. ♖e4 ♕f7 4. ♖e5 ♕e7 5. ♗a4 ♕d7 6. ♗c5+ ♕c6 7. ♗xe6

this wins if you notice that White queens with check. **7. ♖xe6 ♕xc5 8. f5 a4 9. f6**

a3 10. f7 a2 11. f8=♚+

7... a4 8. ♗d4+ ♕c5 9. f5 a3 10. f6 a2 11. ♗c2 ♕c4 12. f7 ♕c3 13. ♗a1 ♕b2

14. f8=♚ ♕xa1 Knowing the following is important. **15. ♖d4 ♕b1 16. ♚b4+ ♕a1**

17. ♚d2 ♕b1 18. ♖d3 a1=♚ 19. ♚c2# 1-0

Top 20 Active MN Players by Over-the-Board USCF Rating as of May 1, 2023

Rank	Player	Rating
1	Wesley So - GM	2833
2	John Bartholomew - IM	2534
3	Sean Nagle - IM	2508
4	Alice Lee - WIM & FM	2453
5	Samrug Narayanan - FM	2383
6	Ashton Jin - NM	2309
7	Linden Lee - NM	2305
8	Andrew Titus - NM	2283
9	Leonard Johnson - FM	2253
10	Joseph Truelson - NM	2246
11	Jackson Wahl - NM	2224
12	Okey Iwu - NM	2220
13	Matthew Jensen - NM	2219
14	Vaibhav Kalpaka - NM	2213
15	Dexter Thompson - NM	2200
16	John Talghader - NM	2174
17	Kyler Weatherspoon - NM	2170
18	Andrew Sheehan	2165
19	Ethan Hunt - NM	2143
19	Tim Radermacher - NM	2143

Minnesota State Chess Association 2023 Summer Grand Prix Series

- \$2,000 Guaranteed Incremental Prizes !!

- Qualification for the 2024 State Closed Championship Playoffs !!

May 20-21

St. Cloud

July 8-9

Rochester

June 24-25

Duluth/Superior

July 21-23

Franklin

Sept 16-17

Roseville

Grand Finale of Grand Prix Series @ Northern Open

Rules:

1. To qualify for prizes must play at least 8 games during series and be MSCA member.
2. $\text{Players Score} / \text{Number of Rounds} \times \text{Total Number of Players at the Event}$
 $\times \text{Median Section Rating} / 1000 = \text{Grand Prix Points}$ (see example below).
3. Non-Playing TDs Score 50% of possible points against median rating in the section of their rating.
4. Best 4 grand prix scores count for determining prizes; can throw out low score or missed tournament.

Grand Prix Prizes for Cumulative Points - Guaranteed by MSCA - In Addition to Regular Event Prizes

	U1100	U1400	U1700	U2000	Open	Total
1st Place	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 200	\$ 400	\$ 1,200
2nd Place	\$ 120	\$ 120	\$ 120	\$ 120	\$ 200	\$ 680
3rd Place					\$ 120	\$ 120
Total	\$ 320	\$ 320	\$ 320	\$ 320	\$ 720	\$ 2,000

Section Prizes based on USCF Ratings from July 2023 Supplement which comes out 3rd Wednesday of June.

Winner of Open Qualifies for 2024 State Closed Championship Playoffs

Winner of U2000 Qualifies for 2024 U2000 Closed Playoffs (Rating Measured based on July 2023 Supplement)

Winner of U1700 Qualifies for 2024 U1700 Closed Playoffs (Rating Measured Based on July 2023 Supplement)

Using Winter Open Tournament from January 2023 for these example calculations.

	Grand Prix Pts	Pts Scored	Median	Section
Okey Iwu	270	4.5	1985	Open
David Schabert	270	4.5	1985	Open
Tim Radermacher	210	3.5	1985	Open
Michael Haynes	196	4.5	1442	U1800
Jaryd Traaholt	118	5.0	784	U1300
Ed Bourgeois	59	2.5	784	U1300
Dane Zagar (TD)	150	2.5	1985	Open

Tournament	Date	Site	# Players	Time Control	Chief TD	Asst. TD	Comments
St. Cloud Open Grand Prix #1	May 20-21	St. Cloud	80	G/90 d10	Emmons	Wahl / Bourne	Points Winners Qualify for \$2,000 in prizes & 2024 State Playoffs!!
Non-Rated Tournament for New Players	June 3	Plymouth CC	30	G/30 d5 (3 rounds)	Wahl	Bourne	Master Simul & USCF Memberships to top 25%
MN Blitz Championship	June 17	Plymouth CC	50	3+2	Emmons	Wahl / Bourne	Rented Triple the Space!!
Lake Superior Open Grand Prix #2	June 24-25	Superior, WI	105	G/90 + 30s FIDE	Grube	Zagar	Dane Zagar & Andy Grube organizing
Rochester Open*	July 8-9	Rochester	90	G/60 +30s	Emmons	Wahl	Grand Prix #3
Catfish Days*	July 21-23	Franklin	50	G/90 +30s	Zagar	None	Grand Prix #4
Northern Open	September 16-17	Roseville	95	G/60 + 30s	Bellinger	Zagar	Grand Prix #5
TCCL	1 Friday / Month September - March	Chess Castle	120	G/90 d5	Tim R – Gold Dane Z - Silver	None	Gold & Silver Divisions on different Fridays
State Senior Championship	October 21-22	Chess Castle	25	G/90 +30s	Bellinger	None	Winner to Nat'l Event
Apple Valley Scholastic*	November 4	Eastview High School	100	TBD	Wahl	Emmons	MSCA providing some financial support
Class Championships	November 11-12	TBD	90	G/90 +30s	Emmons	Wahl / Bourne	Winners Qualify for 2024 Closed Playoffs
Hall of Fame Classic	December 16-17	Chess Castle	60	G/60 + 30s	Zagar	None	Score-based prizes
Winter Open	January 20-21	Roseville	110	G/90 +30s FIDE	Zagar	Bellinger	FIDE Rated
Minnesota Open	February 23-25	Plymouth Crowne Plaza	200	G/90 +30s FIDE	Emmons	Wahl / Bourne	6 Rounds?
State Scholastic	March 9-10	University of St. Thomas	300	G/60 d5	TBD	TBD	7 RDS K-12 & K-8 6 RDS K-5 & 5 RDS K-3
State Championship Playoffs (Stenberg Cup)	March 22-24	TBD	24	40/90 SD/30 +30s FIDE	Emmons	None	
Denker/Barber Playoffs	April 6-7	Chess Castle	12	G/90 + 30s	Bellinger	None	Winners to Nat'l Event
Haring K-12 Girls Champ.	April 13	Chess Castle	10	G/45 d5	Emmons	None	Winner to Nat'l Event

* MSCA supported event – not MSCA official event

[Event "Northern Open 2022"]
[Site "https://lichess.org/study/v2MM9VeK/wpJhtilp"]
[Round "1"]
[White "William Murray"]
[Black "Jack Bellinger"]
[Result "0-1"]
[WhiteElo "2030"]
[BlackElo "1651"]
[TimeControl "G/60 + 30"]
[Annotator "Jack Bellinger"]
[UTCDate "2022.12.29"]
[UTCTime "21:59:07"]
[Variant "Standard"]
[ECO "A80"]
[Opening "Dutch Defense: Hopton Attack"]

{ This game was the 1st round of the 2022 Northern Open. With the white pieces was William (Bill) Murray, and with the black pieces was myself, Jack Bellinger. I chose this game because there were minimal mistakes by my opponent, my ability to overcome the later time trouble, and since Bill is the highest rated player I have defeated. Enjoy! }

1. d4 f5 { This is my main weapon against 1. d4, the Dutch, and specifically the Stonewall Dutch. } 2. Bg5 { I wasn't surprised when this was the first few moves, as I had heard of Bill's reputation of d4 Bg5 in the first two moves, combined with the fact that this position can be more precarious for the inexperienced Dutch player. } 2... g6 { The position I'm going for resembles a leningrad-stonewall Dutch hybrid, since my normal stonewall is no longer easily accomplished. } (2... Nf6 { My normal move would land me in a bit of trouble as my structure is already damaged. } 3. Bxf6 exf6) 3. e3 Bg7 4. Bc4 Nf6 5. Nc3 c6 { Preparing d5 0-0 e6 for my normal setup here. } 6. h4 h6 { The normal response in these positions to h4 when a Bishop is on g5 is to go h6. It's not necessarily bad here, just not the best. } (6... d5 { Kicking the Bishop w/ d5 and then h6 was better. } 7. Bb3 h6) 7. Bxf6 Bxf6 8. Nh3 { Sort of an odd looking move, going for the f4 square with the knight. } (8. Nce2 { Bill had the right idea in going for the f4 square, but Nce2 is the best way to do it, avoiding the awkward setup. I can still prevent the knight from going there by doing what I did in the game, however white gets a nice setup anyways. }) 8... d5 { First kicking the Bishop. } (8... Bxh4 { Asking to be killed. This pawn continues to "hang" for a while still, however, I continue to choose rather than being greedy to not fall further behind in development. It also just simply blunders to Nf4 here. } 9. Nf4 Bf6 10. Nxc6) 9. Bd3 { A critical position, as any of my normal moves would result in an already worse position. } 9... e5 { e5 is a common idea in stonewall positions. However, it usually happens after everything has been developed and our King is safe. I often struggle with adapting away from my openings early on when the position demands it, so I'm very glad I gave this position a thorough look. I can now develop much easier as I'm less cramped, plus Nf4 is much less strong. Ironically, I had just read the day before the section in Amateur's Mind by Jeremy Silman which highlighted knight vs bishop imbalances, so the idea of disallowing his knights to get to powerful squares was fresh in my mind, and this continues to be important going forward. } (9... Nd7 10. h5 { Already under

pressure when we are still a few moves away from finishing development and getting our King to safety. }) (9... Rg8 { According to my computer, this is the second best move, but this feels like me accepting an already worse position, protecting instead of developing actively. This highlights the necessity of e5. }) 10. dxe5 Bxe5 11. Qd2 Qf6 { I chose Qf6 to pressure along the diagonal, guard g6, and I also was considering long castles. } (11... Qxh4 { Apparently it's safe to take, but I've had a greedy pawn grabbing problem in the past so I decided to just continue regular development. }) 12. O-O-O Be6 13. f4 { Bc7 and Bxc3 are roughly equal options. After Bxc3, I give up the Bishop pair but double my opponents pawns, however I didn't see any clear or immediate way to make use of this advantage. I chose Bc7. } 13... Bc7 { My plan is Nd7 followed by Bb6 to get my Bishop more active and/or Nc5 to improve my knight. } { [%cal Gb8d7,Gd7c5,Gc7b6] } 14. Ne2 { Looking for Nd4. I decided to "prevent" it w/ Bb6 immediately, also activating my Bishop. } 14... Bb6 15. Nd4 { He plays it anyways. As a line below shows, Bxd4 is losing. } 15... Nd7 { Getting another piece developed. } (15... Bxd4 16. exd4 Qxd4 { This leads to a quick death, as we are too exposed down the e-file } (16... Nd7 17. Rde1 O-O-O { Not going for Qxd4 results in a position where we are alive, but under a serious amount of pressure. }) 17. Rde1 Qf6 18. Rxe6+ Qxe6 19. Re1 { Ouch }) 16. Ng1 { The useless knight finally decides to try to get back into play. He is going for Ngf3, followed by getting the knight to the strong e5 square. I spent a lot of time here calculating on how to prevent his knights from getting permanent strong squares, and while the computer does not entirely approve, I get a fine position out of it. I would detail the line I calculated, however it is exactly what happens in the game! } (16. Nxe6 Qxe6 { Losing the Bishop for the knight is no concern, white trades their most active piece for our poor Bishop. }) 16... Nc5 { Preparing to jump into e4. } 17. Ngf3 Ne4 { The point of the knight maneuver was to gain this strong square where I hit the queen. White doesn't have much of an option other than Bxe4, wherein the knight on f6 should jump to e5. That's where my entire plan from a few moves ago is revealed, Bc7, where I thought the position was better for me since I will be giving my opponent doubled isolated pawns, the e5 one being very difficult to guard. Again, this happens in the game. } { [%cal Gd3e4,Gf5e4,Gf3e5,Gb6c7] } 18. Bxe4 fxe4 19. Ne5 Bc7 { Unfortunately, my plan of Bc7 way back from move 16 didn't work after all, because of h5 by white, shredding the position open. Can't really blame myself for not seeing this, as a 2000 didn't see it either even when the position was on the board. } 20. Nxe6 { Trying to get his Queen to d4 to support the pawn. } (20. h5 gxh5 21. Rxh5) 20... Qxe6 21. Qd4 { An important decision is to be made here, as we have the option of trading off the minor pieces to isolate a white pawn, but our king is fairly exposed in that endgame. The white knight looks pretty, at the moment it doesn't pressure anything serious, but in the future should a target arise it will be quite powerful. Due to this and the nature of the somewhat closed } position I took, and while I thought the endgame was a bit better for black, it's at least equal since the weak king outweighs any sort of disadvantage white receives for the weak pawn. } 21... Bxe5 22. fxe5 { Entering a middle-endgame phase. Here, black tries to argue that e5 is too weak and will fall. White argues they can hold onto it, while applying sufficient play with his rooks. An additional note which I underestimated during the game was dangerous tactical ideas that white can try to employ on the kingside should I castle actively with short castles. I was also now under 5 minutes going forward, and in several moves Bill is as well. } 22... O-O { Getting a rook to the open f-file and connecting the rooks. } 23. Rdf1 Rf5 { Pressuring the pawn and looking to get the other rook into play. } 24. Rf4 { Looking to double the rooks in the future. } 24... Rxe5 { A bit

more uncomfortable of a decision, as the line shows Qxe5 leads to a position where we win the pawn but white's Rooks are active enough that it should just be drawn. Nonetheless Qxe5 was best. } (24... Qxe5 25. Qxe5 Rxe5 26. Rhf1) 25. g4 { Here I started really worrying. Despite being up a pawn, white is the one who applies the pressure, and I'm so low on time. } 25... Qe7 { Trying to give my rook some breathing room. } 26. Rhf1 Re6 27. g5 hxg5 (27... h5 { Locking things up was best, not allowing threats down the h-file. }) 28. hxg5 Qxg5 { I grabbed a second pawn, despite my comment about not being greedy earlier. I didn't see any immediate kill for white, and should I survive and liquidate the current pressure, I should be winning with +2 on material. } 29. Rh1 { Here I got down all the way to 5 seconds! I managed to find the only move which survives, where the position is equal. } (29. Rf7 { Actually the scarier option for white, as we are under permanent pressure and our pieces aren't coordinated. This was white's final chance for any sort of advantage, and I was surprised when he didn't play it. } 29... Qe5 30. Qb4 Rb8 31. Rf8+ Kg7 32. R8f7+ Kg8) 29... Qe5 30. Qd2 { I believe this was the position in which Bill offered a draw. I declined, as his pressure had lessened, and I was up two pawns. } 30... Rf8 31. Rxf8+ Kxf8 32. Rf1+ { Now black is winning and I don't let up. Black's king is now permanently safe, and his pieces can easily be coordinated and offer trades into an endgame where we are winning. } 32... Rf6 33. Qb4+ Kg8 (33... Kg7 { A moment where I lose concentration can throw things away still. } 34. Qxb7+) 34. Rh1 Rf7 35. Qa5 b6 36. Qe1 { Now it is a matter of technique and not missing any easy threats. } 36... Rf3 37. Qh4 Qg7 38. Qg5 Rf5 39. Qd8+ Qf8 40. Qh4 Rf1+ { Simplifying. The rest is just slowly bringing up the king, queen, and g-pawn all together, while avoiding any accidental perpetuals. } 41. Rxf1 Qxf1+ 42. Kd2 Qg2+ 43. Kd1 Qf3+ 44. Kd2 Kg7 45. Qe7+ Qf7 46. Qe5+ Qf6 47. Qc7+ Kh6 48. Qh2+ Kg5 49. Qg3+ Kh5 50. Qh2+ Qh4 51. Qe5+ g5 { Making more progress. } 52. Qe8+ Kg4 53. Qe6+ Kf3 54. Qf5+ Kg2 55. Ke2 Qh5+ { I grabbed some more time by repeating once here. } 56. Kd2 Qh4 57. Ke2 Qg3 { I spent a bit of time to ensure Qf1+ was useless. } 58. Qf1+ Kh2 { No more checks for white! } 59. Qf5 Qf3+ { It was in this position where Bill resigned. We were one of the last games in the playing hall at this point. I was extremely happy with the result and how I played, it was a large confidence boost going forward. Before the next round, my friend John Blomer came up to me to confirm I lost!?! I jokingly gave him a hard time for not having more confidence in me. I'd like to give a quick thanks to my coach Dane Zagar, I don't think I'd make it out of the opening in this game without him. Thanks for the opportunity for the scholarship! } 0-1